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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KINSHASA 001669

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [CG](#) [ELECTIONS](#)
SUBJECT: DRC ELECTIONS: MLC LEADERS ON CAMPAIGN AND
POST-ELECTION PERIOD

REF: A. KINSHASA 1485

[1](#)B. KINSHASA 1652

[1](#)C. KINSHASA 1622

Classified By: PolOff CBrown, reasons 1.4 b/d.

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: Key officials of Vice President Jean-Pierre Bemba's Movement for the Liberation of Congo (MLC) say they are confident that Bemba will hold key strongholds in the October 29 presidential election and increase his tally elsewhere. They complain that MLC supporters are being harassed by pro-Kabila campaigners. In the event of a Kabila victory, they believe he and his supporters will attempt to marginalize or threaten the MLC, and would be based on "exclusion" and "arrogance." End summary.

[1](#)2. (U) Two key advisers to Vice President Jean-Pierre Bemba discussed presidential campaign and post-election issues with PolCouns and PolOff in separate meetings October 20 and 23. Delly Sesanga, former Bemba chief of staff and spokesman for the Union for the Nation (UN) electoral alliance, and Thomas Luhaka, Executive Secretary of Bemba's Movement for the Liberation of the Congo (MLC) party, held senior positions in the transitional government until taking seats in the new parliament installed in late September. They have formed, with Francois Muamba, the core of strategists and negotiators for Bemba's dealing with the Kabila camp and the international community.

MLC CONFIDENT BEMBA WILL HOLD THE WEST

[1](#)3. (C) Both expressed optimism about Bemba's chances in key western provinces for the October 29 presidential vote. They agreed Bemba would carry Kinshasa as he did in the first round. Luhaka, who is coordinating Bemba's campaign in the capital, thought Bemba might even improve his showing in Kinshasa. He was also confident about Bemba's chances in Bandundu province, stronghold of Antoine Gizenga's Unified Lumumbist Party (PALU), which has allied with President Kabila's Alliance for the Presidential Majority (AMP) (ref A). In Luhaka's view, Gizenga's decision to back Kabila is being rejected by PALU's supporters. He also claimed PALU would be unable to motivate voters to head to the polls because it lacks a "big political machine."

[1](#)4. (C) Sesanga said he believes Bemba will also do well in Equateur and Bas-Congo provinces, as he did July 30. He also maintained Bemba has strong support in Eastern and Western Kasai provinces. A native Kasaiian, he agreed that the winner there will most likely be determined by voter participation,

particularly in the provincial capitals of Kananga and Mbuji-Mayi (ref B).

¶15. (C) Sesanga claimed Kabila's support in the East is in fact weak, despite Kabila's strong showing there in the first round. He said the MLC campaign there aimed at revealing Kabila's "lies" about his efforts to secure the country and restore peace.

BUT CONCERNED ABOUT CAMPAIGNING

¶16. (C) Both Sesanga and Luhaka raised concerns about the conduct of the current political campaign. They claimed MLC supporters were being targeted throughout the country, and that Kabila supporters were misusing state resources. Luhaka reiterated the MLC's criticism of the decision to limit the presidential campaign to 15 days because it did not provide enough time to travel throughout the country.

¶17. (C) Sesanga confirmed that Bemba would not campaign outside Kinshasa because the party has "no confidence" in Kabila or Congolese security forces to provide adequate protection. He said Bemba did not accept MONUC's offer of a helicopter for campaigning because he would have had to travel via Kabila-controlled airports before being able to use it. Luhaka claimed some party members had been harassed by Kabila's Republican Guard while attempting to campaign in Kinshasa and in Kisangani.

¶18. (C) Sesanga complained that the recently signed campaign code of conduct was not being respected by Kabila's AMP. He cited what he saw as AMP-inspired violence in the eastern

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cities of Lubumbashi, Lodja, and Bukavu (ref C). He also said the AMP had effectively "privatized" the government-controlled RTNC television station, using it to broadcast messages exclusively favoring Kabila.

THINKING ABOUT LIFE IN THE OPPOSITION

¶19. (C) Sesanga and Luhaka expressed confidence in a Bemba victory, but it is clear they are considering the possibility of a Bemba loss. Both spoke openly about the potential future of the MLC as an opposition party. Each expressed different views of what form such a future might take, but were certain that it would be driven by attempts by the Kabila camp to exclude others from power.

¶10. (C) Sesanga said he believes a Kabila-AMP victory would create a "government of exclusion" to monopolize power. He expressed doubt that Kabila would recognize or respect the rights of a political opposition, and might use the state security apparatus to monitor the MLC and harass its members.

¶11. (C) Sesanga stated that the party had every right to defend itself and would react strongly if Kabila attempts to intimidate the MLC following the election. He sketched out a scenario in which the MLC, in alliance with the Kasai-based Union for Democracy and Social Progress (UDPS), would effectively make Kinshasa, Equateur, Bas-Congo and Eastern and Western Kasai, "ungovernable."

¶12. (C) In Luhaka's view, life for the MLC in opposition would be "comfortable," but Kabila and his supporters in the National Assembly would govern "with arrogance" if they won. He said this would lead to an eventual breakdown in the AMP coalition, leaving the MLC the only party remaining able to provide leadership in the parliament.

COMMENT: BELIEVING THEY AT LEAST HAVE A CHANCE

¶13. (C) Comment: Sesanga and Luhaka were clearly wanted to send the message that the MLC has at least a chance of winning the election. Bemba faces significant challenges, however, if he is to defeat Kabila in the October 29 election. End comment.
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